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### A CONTEST AND ITS LESSON.

Commenting upon an interesting contest which has been brought to a close recently, the esteemed Richmond News Leader, makes the following observations:

"The Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company has won out against the Brooklyn navy yard both as to the time and cheapness of warship construction. The race, or competition, was in the building of the Louisiana by the former and the Connecticut at the latter. The keel of the Louisiana was laid Feb. 7, 1903, and the final delivery of the great fighting machine to the government will be made tomorrow. The actual time of construction has been three years, three months and twenty-two days, and the cost of the ship \$3,982,000. The keel of the Connecticut was laid just thirty days later, it will be some months yet before she is finished, already the total appropriation for her, \$4,112,000, has been absorbed and the department like Oliver Twist is calling for more—for \$380,000 more.

"The department, it is understood, claims, however, that the navy yard will even up in the long run because the Connecticut will prove cheaper than the sister ship owing to the use in her of better material and the work's necessitating less repair. But that remains to be seen. There is no reason to believe that the Newport News people do not put into the battleships they build the best material that can be obtained, especially as what they use is rigidly inspected by government experts, and there is every reason to believe that the mechanics and laborers they employ are as skilled and experienced and faithful in discharge of their duties as those employed at the government navy yards. We reckon that when the whole proposition is summed up it will be found that there is very little difference, if any, in the materials used in the two ships, and that the victory of the Newport News Company is attributable to its better equipment and to better organization, from both the standpoint of business methods and the systematic working together of its employees."

While the keel of the Louisiana was laid a month ahead of the Connecticut, the Brooklyn navy yard had several months the start of the local yard in ordering and assembling material for the sister ship of the huge fighter just turned over to the government by the Newport News builders. The talk about better material in the Connecticut is tommy-rot pure and simple and no one is better acquainted with that fact than those members of the navy department who claim that a ground for the discrepancy in cost is found in that item. There has never been complaint concerning the naval vessels built at the local shipyard and some of them have made record breaking runs after having been in commission five or six years. They certainly have held their own in competition with the Texas and other government built ships. There is no reason to believe that the Louisiana is worse than the average ship built here, or that the Connecticut is better than the average ship built in the government's navy yard.

The private yard had no unfair advantage in the contest, which conclusively proved that something like half a million dollars may be saved by the government in constructing each of its great battleships by private contract.

In showing his temper at the answer of a witness before the asylum

investigating commission, Chairman Sadler manifested the possession of an undue estimate of his own importance and the lack of common sense. Why should the witness be afraid of him? Is he a bear?

Senator Platt is quoted as having said that he will retire when he gets "D-n good and ready." It is possible that he may get ready some of these days, but most persons are of the opinion that he never will get "D-n good."

"An oath is never justifiable," says Dr. Parkhurst. He will have to admit that there are extenuating circumstances, however, if he ever had practical experience with the every-day tactics of the "intelligent compositor."

It must be that the American people still have a distinct relish for the trappings of royalty if one may judge by the space which the daily papers are giving to the nuptials of a second-rate king to a commonplace English girl.

Poor old Stoessel would have saved himself a good deal of trouble and humiliation either by being born an American or by stepping in the way of one of the Japanese eleven-inch shells during the siege of Port Arthur.

If Addicks really has withdrawn from the Delaware senatorial race it is a safe bet that poverty and force of circumstances were the dentists which had sufficient pull to bring about that desirable condition of affairs.

If those Chattanooga folks who showed their contempt of the United States by lynching Ed Johnson should be given a good dose of punishment, they may be cured of that contemptuous feeling.

It is claimed that the Chinese boycott increased the sale of the boycotted goods in the Celestial Empire. Which shows that even undesirable advertising some times pays.

### A GOOD ACTOR.

How a Famous French Advocate Won a Hopeless Murder Case.

Maitre Lachand, the famous advocate, was perhaps the greatest master of comedy in France, and not a few eminent actors envied him his marvelous powers of mimicry. He was once employed to defend a murderer, against whom the facts were hopelessly clear.

When his pathetic appeals and his tears—which were always at call when he pleaded before a country jury—failed to touch his stolid audience, he resorted to the most impudent piece of trickery. Thrusting his moistened white handkerchief into his pocket, he demanded if the jurors were men, if they had human hearts, if they could bring themselves to condemn a fellow man like the accused, whom he had credited with all sorts of chivalrous if not saintly merits.

His eloquence was not merely fruitless, but the jury responded to it at first with uneasy shuffling, then with biting lips, and finally with loud and uncontrolled bursts of laughter. Lachand, while flinging about his hands, had intentionally dipped his fingers into the great inkpot in front of him, and as he drew his right hand across his forehead, as if in agony of despair at the certain fate of the accused, he left upon his brow an enormous black mark like a crescent moon and drew two other black traces down his cheeks as he put his fingers to his eyes to dash away the tears.

Felting high moral indignation at their conduct, he continued: "You are about to decide whether one of your fellow men shall be thrust by you out of the ranks of the living, and you choose such a moment for indulging in cruel and thoughtless laughter. Is this extravagant mirth a fitting mood in which to decide whether a man shall or shall not die?"

The argument actually told upon the jury. The man was acquitted.—Paris Journal.

### Ancient Dress Still Worn.

In the little town of Munsdel, in Bavaria, there exists one of the most curious charitable foundations in the world. One of the burghers, Christopher Wanner, died in 1451 and left his fortune for the establishment of a home for aged poor. He attached, however, the condition that every old man who was taken in should wear his beard and the same cut of clothes and cap as he himself used to wear; consequently the ancient pensioners are still to be seen wandering about the streets of Munsdel in the costumes of the fifteenth century.

### POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

Of all the words in the English language "don't tell" are paid the least attention.

The only trouble with experience as a teacher is that the knowledge she gives comes too late.

The trouble with the average father being prepared for a rainy day is that his daughter's wedding day gets him first.

Don't cultivate that habit of looking for something to worry about. You may some day have your search rewarded.

Sometimes people complain of their individuality being crushed out when it would really be the best thing that could happen to them.

### THE ROOSEVELT OMELET.

Recipe of Dish That Bids Fair to Become Famous.

Here is the recipe for President Roosevelt's pepper omelet, which bids fair to become as famous as the corned beef hash of the late Mark Hanna's cook, Maggie, says a Washington dispatch to the Philadelphia North American:

"Melt an ounce of butter in a saucepan, and in it stir two spoonfuls of flour. Use one pint of beef stock, half a dozen good sized mushrooms and half a dozen whole peppers. Season with salt, pepper, a dash of nutmeg and cook for twenty minutes. When done add half a pint of shrimps, three fresh peppers, chopped fine, and let simmer for five minutes. Prepare a plain omelet and pour in the mixture before it is turned over. Serve on hot plates."

This wonderful omelet is being served regularly at the White House. No person seems to know just where the recipe came from, but there are hints that President Roosevelt got it from a famous western Chinese cook who can beat the world in preparing eggs.

Right in this connection is the recipe of Maggie, who for years made the hash which hundreds of famous men ate at Mr. Hanna's home. According to Maggie, one puts into a pan a good sized lump of butter and when the pan is hot adds the desired quantity of finely chopped corned beef and lets it heat. The original part comes in the treatment of the potatoes, which are freshly baked, scooped out from the skins while hot and added to the beef. The mixture is seasoned with salt, pepper, a dash of nutmeg and a dash of onion juice, moistened with chicken broth or beef stock and served piping hot.

### WOMAN'S UNIQUE HONOR.

How Miss Mamie Offutt Swore in Alabama's Chief Justice.

The honor of swearing in a chief justice of her state is the unique one that has come to Miss Mamie Offutt, the official notary and stenographer of the governor of Alabama, says a Montgomery (Ala.) dispatch to the New York Evening World. Perhaps no other woman has had so important a duty to perform in the history of the south and possibly of all the country.

Samuel D. Weakley of Birmingham was appointed chief justice of the supreme court to succeed Thomas N. McClellan, deceased. He came to the capital to be sworn in on a day when the clerk of the supreme court had left the city and other officers were out as well. Casting about for some one with authority to administer the obligation, it was found that the governor's stenographer was the only notary present. After some persuasion she consented.

The oath to be taken by a chief justice in Alabama contains all sorts of promises, including one that he will not engage in any duel or in any other way have a hand in breaking the laws. Miss Offutt went through the ceremony without a hitch and was congratulated by Judge Weakley and the others when she had finished. She signed her name to the papers, and they went to the archives.

### EARLIEST SOCIETY ITEM.

Chiseled in Stone, It Recounts Wedding of Old Ramesses.

The earliest known "society item" has been unearthed by Professor James Breasted of the University of Chicago, who is now in Egypt, and the report of the discovery sent to Robert M. Harper of the university, says a Chicago dispatch.

Ramesses II. and a Hittite princess figured as principals in a marriage affair. The "item" was chiseled on one of the ruined temples, and Professor Breasted says it is not much different from a similar notice of moderns in a modern newspaper.

There was wine, song and a spectacular procession in the presence of the priest who made them one. Ramesses did business in the fourteenth century before the Christian era. His wars, loves and adventures are buried in the mists of the past, but he comes down to the present day as the hero of a song beginning, "In the days of old Ramesses, are you on?"

### Ducks Roasted on the Wing.

"It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good," say the residents in the vicinity of the burning gas well at Caney, Kan., and well they might, for as long as the well burns and ducks continue to fly they are prospering over others' misfortune, says the Kansas City Journal. The heat rising from the fire extends to a great height, and since the beginning wild ducks have played the game of the moth and flame, much to their sorrow and distress. No sooner does a duck fly across the forbidden territory than it is caught and baked by the torrid winds. The neighbors have caught on to the fact and near mealtime gather near the well and wait for the fall of the baked duck, which of course saves a great deal of time and trouble otherwise necessary in the kitchen.

### Unique "Big Stick" For the President

O. C. Sprague, a woodworker of McDonough county, Ill., is engaged in manufacturing a baseball bat which he will present to President Roosevelt, says a Bloomington special dispatch to the Cincinnati Commercial Tribune. The bat is of a new design and is beautifully carved. A small inlaid star is made from rosewood taken from the pilot wheel of the Mercedes, one of the Spanish vessels sunk by Admiral Schley during the Spanish-American war. The maker of the bat will dedicate it to the executive as a "big stick" for the maintenance of order.

### A HISTORIC TRAGEDY

EXECUTION OF JOSEPH LESURQUES AND ITS SAD SEQUEL.

The Famous Legal Blunder That Occurred in France Upon Which Was Founded the Popular Melodrama "The Lyons Mail."

The tragedy of the execution of Joseph Lesurques, an innocent man, by the legal machinery of France in the eighteenth century is an incident replete with pathetic phases.

Although Lesurques was executed as far back as 1796, though his innocence was established in 1801, though his property was restored to the family in 1824, the corps legislatif, after the family had tried for over half a century to have his memory judicially rehabilitated, definitely refused in 1830 to perform this last remaining act of justice. The pedantry of French law forbade the questioning of a jury's verdict by any one save the person directly interested. But though the law has failed to remove the stigma on the name of an innocent man, literature and the drama have made him a popular hero. "The Lyons Mail," in which his honor is thoroughly vindicated, has been one of the most popular of all French melodramas, and the combined genius of Charles Reade and of Henry Irving made it one of the great successes of the modern English stage.

Poor Lesurques, who, when he perished on the scaffold, was but thirty-three years of age, was a good husband, a good father and a good citizen. He married in 1790 Mlle. Campion, a lady of respectable family in Douai and possessed of a handsome dowry. Their children therefore were very young, and it was in order to give them the benefit of a superior education that he relinquished a public appointment at Douai and came to Paris, there to live on his own private fortune, which amounted to about 7,500 francs a year. He had but just arrived in the capital and was superintending the furnishing of his new home when the thunderbolt fell.

On April 27, 1796, the mail coach between Lyons and Paris was attacked and plundered, and the postilion and courier were murdered. There were no witnesses to the crime, but it was reported that a party of horsemen had been seen in the vicinity at about the time it was committed. These horsemen had taken dinner at an inn at Montfermeil. One of Lesurques' friends named Guenot was arrested on suspicion, and his private papers were seized. There was no evidence to hold him on except that he answered the description of one of the supposed murderers, and he was dismissed. Next day he was told to call for his papers at the central bureau. He was accompanied thither by Lesurques, an act of madness on the part of the latter had he been guilty.

It happened that just at that time the judge was taking the depositions of witnesses who lived in the neighborhood of the scene of the murder. Among these were two maidservants of Montfermeil, who uttered simultaneous screams at the appearance of the two friends. They were put into the witness box and swore positively that two of the horsemen were present in the audience. When confronted with Lesurques and Guenot they positively identified them. Both were arrested and thrown into prison. At the trial four other witnesses corroborated their testimony with equal emphasis as regarded Lesurques, but were doubtful about Guenot. The latter succeeded in establishing a satisfactory alibi and was released. The former's attempted alibi seemed to break down badly when the daybook of the jeweler, Lagrand, to whom he swore he had sold a bill of goods on the very day of the murder, was produced in court and the date of the charge was found to have been altered.

In vain the jeweler protested that the first date was a mistake, which he had immediately corrected, and he and all the other witnesses for Lesurques were looked upon as self convicted perjurers. Lesurques was found guilty and executed, together with one of the real murderers, named Courriel, who on mounting the scaffold confessed his own guilt, but declared the innocence of Lesurques. Doubts began to arise as to the justice of Lesurques' sentence, and finally it was discovered that he had suffered through extraordinary resemblance to one Dubose, the real criminal, who was brought to justice in 1801, convicted and executed.

This deplorable case had most deplorable sequels. The unhappy Mme. Lesurques went mad on hearing the news of her husband's condemnation. The children were as yet too young to understand their trouble, but as they grew up one thought alone possessed them, that of vindicating their dead father. It is easy to understand how brooding over this purpose drove one daughter to the madhouse in which her mother had been confined.

It is curious that one of the witnesses against Lesurques, the woman Alfroy, also went insane from grief and remorse at her error. Still another victim was another daughter of Lesurques, who, worn out by the fruitless struggle with the pedantry of the French laws, drowned herself in the Seine. His son left France, took service in the Russian army and courted and found death there. As regards Lesurques' fortune, which had been confiscated, his unhappy family were more successful. In 1824, just twenty-eight years after their father's death, they obtained a grant of 244,000 francs, supplemented in 1835 by another grant of 252,000 francs.—London Public Opinion.

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